

Milwaukee Dept. Neighborhood Services presents...

Winter and Holiday Safety Tips



During the holiday season we think about preparing those special decorations and ornaments. But special care and caution should be taken with these preparations. This brochure is designed to assist you with helpful tips on maintaining your safety during the holiday season. Remember, putting safety at the top of your list will keep you safe the whole year.



WINTER HOLIDAY LIGHTING TIPS

INDOOR

- Use lights designed for indoor use. Never exceed number of sets per circuit. Average loads are 200 miniatures and 50 regular large bulb.
- Avoid contact with carpets, furniture, and draperies.
- Use bulbs and wire sets that are UL approved.
- Keep tinsel and icicles away from bulb sockets and outlets.
- Unplug all lights at bedtime and use a timer.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.

OUTDOOR

- Use only sets designed for outdoor use! Never exceed number of sets per circuit.
- Use insulated staples to hold wiring in place. DO NOT USE NAILS.
- To secure strings of lights around the eaves of the house use cup hooks, which are available at local hardware stores.
- Avoid placing light strings on aluminum or steel gutters and siding.

- Be sure the power is off while working on outdoor lighting, especially if you are standing on damp ground.
- Cover outdoor plugs and connector joints with plastic wrap to protect from water or snow. This will prevent electric shock.
- Replace damaged light sets and any extension cords that have cracked insulation or frayed wires.

CANDLES

- Never use candles on any kind of tree.
- Where ever candles are being used make sure they are secured in a non-flammable container especially meant to hold them. Use dripless candles whenever possible.
- Never leave burning candles near drapes, paper, furniture, Christmas trees or table-top decorations.
- Keep candles out of reach of children, who could be burned from the hot wax as well as the flame.
- Never leave burning candles unattended. Always make sure you check them periodically.
- Keep flammable liquids away from burning candles, (sterno, oil, grease, etc.)

CHRISTMAS TREES

Looking for the right type of Christmas tree? Tree shopping can be a joy as well as a pain. Here are some suggestions on how to select the right one.

The best types of Christmas trees to have during the holiday season are white spruce, douglas fir, balsam fir, and scotch pine. These retain their shape, needles, and color longer than most others.

- If possible, buy a tree that is burlap wrapped. This preserves it and keeps it from losing its shape and keeps it moist.
- Water the tree to retain moisture and preserve the life of the tree.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, radiators, TV sets and any other heat producing objects.
- Use fireproof decorations and light reflectors. Keep curtains and furniture away from lights.



- When the tree needles are dried, throw the tree away because it is a potential fire hazard.
- Do not burn the tree in a fireplace.

FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

Each year thousands of people die in fire related deaths and many more will die due to carelessness. This section will help explain ways to prevent fires, along with some helpful safety tips.

The first step to fire safety is to inspect your home for areas where fires may occur. These include: attics for newspaper buildup, furnace maintenance (oiled bearings and clean filters), garage for combustible material, kitchen for potential grease fires, fireplace/chimney for missing mortar (escaping smoke and fire) and creosote clogged flues, and overloaded electrical circuits.

SMOKE DETECTORS

Most fires occur during sleeping hours, and many deaths and injuries are caused by smoke and gases. The safest warning method is to use smoke detectors. One or more detectors must be correctly placed in a residence and they must be in good working condition.

- A battery operated smoke detector will operate for a year and will give you the best audible warning. You should test it biweekly to check that the battery is still good.
- It is important to select detectors that meet performance standards. Look at the package or label on the detector for the Underwriters laboratory (UL) seal/stamp or any recognized national testing laboratory.
- Place detectors close to where people sleep, so that the alarm will be heard. Do not place detectors in "dead" air pockets, (i.e. corners)
- Avoid putting detectors close to heating or air conditioning vents.
- Don't put a smoke detector in the kitchen, since grease, smoke, or cooking fumes may trigger false alarms. Use a HUSH-type detector within 20 ft of a stove. See www.milwaukee.gov for current requirements!
- Always have a smoke detector or fire extinguisher handy.
- Make sure all exits are easy to reach. Do not block the exits with furniture or other objects.

ESCAPE

In the event that a fire does occur, teach your family these tips on a safe way to escape:

Stay low - Smoke rises, so crawl on hands and knees if necessary.

Feel a door before you open it—If the knob or door panels are hot, leave it closed, DO NOT open it, escape by another door or window instead. Practice your escape before the real fire occurs—Fire drills are important in that they help to make certain that each member of your family knows the escape routes. Establish a meeting place outside the building so you will know everyone is safe.

FIRE IN THE KITCHEN

Grease or food fires—If a pan with grease or food catches fire, cover the pan with a lid and turn off the burner. Or, if you have baking soda near by, use it to smother the fire.

Oven Fire- Close the oven door and turn off the stove. Open a window to get the smoke and fumes out.

Microwave fire—Keep the door closed and push the stop switch. Unplug it if possible.

Clothing fire—If your clothing catches on fire, stop, drop and roll to smother the flames if you cannot douse the fire in the sink. Do not try to run —this will cause flames to continue to burn.

Never use a barbecue grill inside your home or on a wood porch outside.

REMEMBER YOUR SAFETY-If you cannot quickly put the fire out, alert others, leave immediately and call the fire department from a neighbors phone.

Energy and Safety...get through the cold winter months by saving lives and energy! Take time now to review good heating habits. This will keep everyone safe and warm. Space heaters can help to save money and energy, especially when you and your family spend a lot of time in one room. Here are a few safety tips to make your evenings a little cozier.

SPACE HEATERS NEED S - P - A - C - E !

- Children are often the victims of space heater burns or fires. Never leave children unattended or alone with a space heater.

- Read labels and follow instructions for installation and operation.

- Leave at least 36 inches of space between the heater, walls, papers, and people.

- Do not use a portable heater in a bedroom where bed coverings may fall on the heater while you sleep. Never use a space heater to dry out anything.

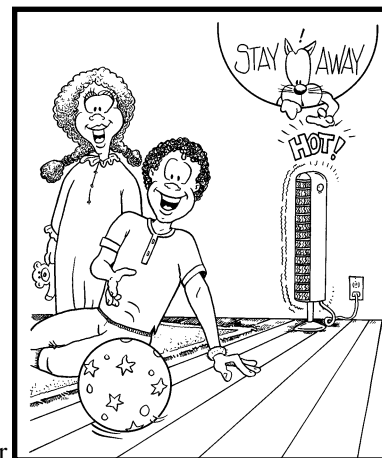
- Do not operate the heater in an unvented area (closed room) —it may cause overheating.

- Never use an extension cord with a space heater.

- Keep electrical space heaters away from water. Failing to do so could result in electrocution.

- Do not use your kitchen stove to heat your home.

- Use only electrical heaters. Kerosene and charcoal heaters produce deadly fumes.



WINTERIZING YOUR HOME



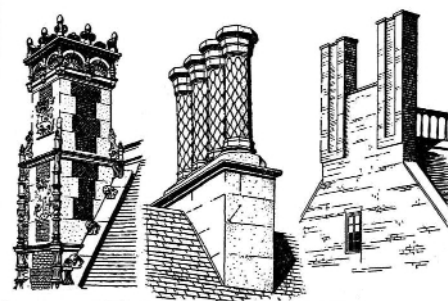
- Insulate your home. Reduce air leaks to keep heat in and cold out. Caulk and weatherstrip windows, or cover them with plastic.
- Store all gasoline powered equipment outdoors in a garage or shed.
- Drain all fuel from summer-time gasoline powered equipment if stored indoors. Label gas cans with type of fuel to avoid mixing oil/gas mixtures with gas only equipment. You can re-use the fuel in spring. Check for leaks. Gasoline fumes are heavier than air so they will sink. Pilot lights on gas furnaces and water heaters can ignite them.
- Keep pipes from freezing by wrapping them in layers of newspaper or using insulation made especially for water pipes. If you must thaw frozen pipes, **DO NOT USE A BLOW TORCH**. Try using a blow dryer or heat gun instead.
- Remove snow and ice from sidewalks and doorways. Outside fire escapes should be clear of snow and ice. Be sure all doors can be opened to their proper clearance. In a fire, there is no time to shovel snow or chop ice.
- Shovel out the nearest fire hydrant. The more time the fire department wastes hooking up the water, the longer your house will burn. Give firefighters some help by clearing the way to the neighborhood hydrant. The house you save may be your own.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SMELL GAS

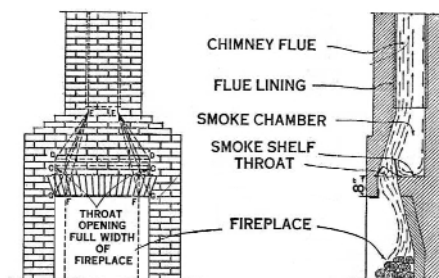
- Natural gas is heavier than air. Pilot lights on the bottom of water heaters and furnaces can cause ignition while out of sight.
- Find out where the odor is coming from. If valves on the range, heater, or gas appliances have been left open, close them.
- If the odor is strong, open the window. **DO NOT LIGHT MATCHES, OR SMOKE IN THIS AREA**. Evacuate the building and call the gas company.
- Leave the building if the leak cannot be found.
- Check pilot lights; relight them only if you know how and the odor of gas has gone away.
- If you know of anyone without any heat, you should call the gas or electric company to alert them to turn the utility back on. Nobody has to go without heat in the winter. Call the emergency fuel number at 265-7588.

FIREPLACE/CHIMNEY TIPS

- Before preparing your fireplace, make sure the chimney, is clean of soot and debris. Check the chimney or flue for cracks.



- The average chimney needs sweeping every year. The flue needs to be cleaned periodically. Monthly inspections are a good idea.



- The best types of wood to use when preparing a fire include oak, hickory, or locust. These last longer and cause less of a smoke buildup.
- Green or recently cut wood burns slow and releases resins that build up in the chimney. This causes chimney fires. Dry out your wood, preferably for a year before burning it. It will burn better and cleaner.
- When building a fire, always make sure there are no flammable liquids around. Never use charcoal lighting fluid to get your fire started.
- A fire place screen or other enclosure should be used to contain sparks.
- Flame retardant rugs or mats help protect carpets from burns.
- Close the flue only after the fire is out to keep warm air from being sucked out the chimney.
- Keep all clothing, furniture, and drapes away from the fire. Do not dry out items in front of a fireplace. Use the dryer!



HELPFUL NUMBERS TO KEEP HANDY

Police Department 933-4444 (Emergency only 911)

Fire Department 286-8948 (Emergency only 911)

Public Information 211

WE Energies 1-800-662-4797

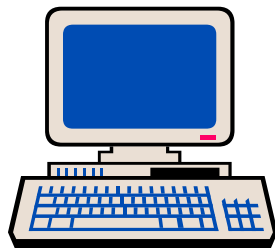
Dept. of Neighborhood Services (414) 286-2268



City of Milwaukee
Department of
Neighborhood Services
841 N. Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202



*Happy and Safe Holidays
from all at
Neighborhood Services*



Visit the Dept. of Neighborhood Services web page at
<http://www.milwaukee.gov>
We are listed under city departments.

City of Milwaukee Neighborhood Services Help Line Numbers

(City 4-digit numbers have a 286- prefix)

3441 Admin Office General	289-6660 Adult Prot. Serv.<=59	297-1029 HUD (MKE area Low Inc Hous List)
2514 Boilers	289-6874 Adult Prot. Serv.>=60	266-1231 Land./Tenant Books
2501 BOZA	2256 Animal Licensing	5987 Lead Abatement
8209 Building Permit Status	3651 Assessor's Office	765-0600 Legal Aid
3838 Code Compliance	847-6000 Better Business Bureau	2238 Licensing
3874 Code Enforcement-Commercial	8209 Building Permit Status	5790 Litter Hotline
2268 Code Enforcement-Residential	273-2020 CAP Community Against Pushers	8207 Microfilm
8600 Community Homes	289-6444 Child Prot. Serv.	278-4070 Milwaukee County Clerk
2268 Complaint Hotline-DNS	2150 City Hall Operator	649-8640 MKE Area Domestic Animal Control Comm.
2557 Condemnation	3393 City Records	272-6952 MKE Young Lawyers Assn.
2513 Construction	278-4128 Clerk of Court MKE Co.	911 MPD/MFD Emergency
2532 Electrical	449-4777 Community Advocates AM	8350 Parking Checkers
2532 Elevator	3674 Consumer Prot. (Health)	8210 Plan Exam
3860 Enforcement	266-1231 Consumer Protection (State)	278-4000 Register of Deeds MKE Co.
3280 Environmental Health	2449 Curb Setbacks	449-4777 Rent Abatement
0437 FAX DNS Admin South 1st Flr	5738 DCD Prop. Mgr. Deborah McCollum-Gathing	5668 Rent Assistance (No new Apps!)
5165 FAX Nuisance & Environmental Lake Tower	8211 Development Center	8674 Sand Blasting Permits
3386 FAX Residential North Lake Tower	800-242-8511 DIGGERS HOTLINE	3280 Sand Blasting/Masonry Cleaning Permits
0830 FAX Residential South Lake Tower	278-5146 DILHR	272-5600 Social Dev. Center North
8715 Graffiti Hotline	263-8500 DNR (Water Quality)	643-8444 Social Dev. Cntr. South
2590 Hazardous Occupancy	5077 DNS Cashier	384-3700 Spanish Center
5618 Housing & Neighborhoods	8282 DPW Info Center	3318 Special Assessments DPW
2954 Landlord Training	8208 DPW Permits	3443 Surveys
2411 Maps and Plates	8208 Driveway Permits	302-6633 Temp. Housing
5618 Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation	287-7425 Emergency Fuel	344-4142 TOOL LOAN L.A.N.D. (Central)
2163 NIP	271-7335 Fire Proof Mattress Covers	442-8665 TOOL LOAN N.H.S. (North)
5771 Nuisance Control	800-462-9029 Flood Relief Info	643-4400 TOOL LOAN N.H.S. (South)
8569 Ownership Information	3674 Food & Measures	8350 Tow Desk
8210 Plan exam Appointments	800-261-5325 Gas Leaks	800-47-drugs We Tip
3361 Plumbing	291-7000 Gas Leaks x7190	325-9046 Wis. Weatherization
2565 Property Information	3861 Graphics Computer PLEX	8210 Zoning Questions
8569 Property Recording Program	800-947-6644 Hearing Impaired Relay	
3214 Public Information-DNS	8208 House Numbers DEV Center	
3645 Rent Withholding	5677 Housing Asst. (Middle Income)	
3361 Sprinklers		
2025 TDD City Hall		